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of a great State. He has made easily available information which otherwise would have been difficult to obtain. The searcher for knowledge pertaining to the fundamental law of the several States will, after consulting the result of his labors, readily acknowledge the debt due to him.

FRANK B. GILBERT.

English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act: The Parish and the County. By SIDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB. (New York and London: Longmans, Green and Company. 1906. Pp. xxv, 664.)

A little more than three years ago (September, 1903) when Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb published their monograph on the *History of Liquor Licensing in England*, there was the interesting and welcome announcement in the preface that it was only a chapter from a much larger work on English local government on which they had already been engaged for four years. This section from the larger work was published in advance in 1903 because at that time a licensing bill was before Parliament; and it was felt that a better comprehension of the history and working of the licensing system might be of service in the controversy which had arisen over the revolutionary proposals of the Balfour government. The monograph of 1903 was then, and has since been, of much service; and moreover the announcement of the larger work contained in the preface awakened pleasant anticipations among students of English history—expectations which, judging from the present volumes, are to be most abundantly realized, both in the magnitude of the new work, and in the plan and style in which it is being carried out.

Not since Merewether and Stephens published in 1835, their treatise on the boroughs and municipal corporations of the United Kingdom has the history of local government in England been attempted by English writers on a scale at all commensurate with the commanding importance of the subject. It is remarkable that during the long period which has intervened between the publication of the *History of the Boroughs and Municipal Corporations*, and the issue of the first volume of Mr. and Mrs. Webb's *magnum opus*, no really comprehensive treatment of local government in England should have been attempted by English writers; and that in this period the field should have been left almost exclusively to the German scholars, Gneist and

Redlich. It is remarkable because between the time when Merewether and Stephens wrote, and the publication of what may be described as Mr. and Mrs. Webb's preliminary volume in 1903, English local government, and to some extent the English system of Parliamentary representation, have been remodeled. A new face has been put on most English political institutions during these sixty years (1835-1903); and their organization has undergone the most sweeping changes. When Merewether and Stephens were collecting the material for their work the then newly-reformed House of Commons was busy overhauling the poor law system, which had previously had little care from Parliament since the passing of the first poor law in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In 1835, when Merewether and Stephens were seeing their two volumes through the press, Parliament was putting an end to the old charters of the municipal corporations; remodeling their constitutions, giving these long discredited and popularly distrusted institutions a new start, endowing them with new powers, bringing them into closer touch with the central government, reëstablishing a supervision from State departments in London which had almost completely lapsed between the Restoration and the first reform act, and, moreover, it was at this time setting up a municipal system which was to be characterized by some measure of uniformity.

The era of constitutional reform had lasted for three exceptionally full years when Merewether and Stephens published their history of the old municipalities. Then came a pause—a pause which is adequately explained by Mr. and Mrs. Webb. County government in 1835 was as much in need of reform as municipal government. The magisterial benches and the powers which the nominated magistrates in quarter sessions exercised in county government were as much assailed by the radicals in the reign of George IV., as the nomination boroughs in the old system of Parliamentary representation; as the poor law system or the corrupt and generally self-perpetuating municipal corporations in the towns and cities. But between 1830 and 1835 all that Parliament did in regard to county government was to relieve the magistrates of some of their powers, and in particular to set up an appeal from petty sessions to quarter sessions in licensing cases, and to sever the former close connection of the magistrates with the poor law.

After 1835 there came a halt in the work of constitutional reform

and the much assailed system of county government through nominated magistrates in quarter sessions survived until 1888. In the meantime Parliamentary representation was again reformed in 1867; and once more in 1884-85. This last reform swept away most of the small Parliamentary boroughs which had survived the reforms of 1832 and 1867—not that they were not rotten boroughs like those which did disappear in 1832, but that these boroughs, or rather the territorial families which controlled them, had influential friends in the governments of 1832 and 1867. In 1884-85, when these survivals of the reforms of 1832 and 1867 finally succumbed to the popular demand for a more equitable distribution of the representation, and for an electorate which should be less corrupt even than that which existed between 1832 and 1884, the Parliamentary franchise was extended to all male householders; and for the old system of county government by the magistrates these reforms of 1884 and 1885 were what the reform act of 1832 was for the old and corrupt municipal corporations which for two or three centuries had been so closely and sordidly interwoven in the old system of Parliamentary representation.

The ancient municipal corporations of necessity went down with the reform of the representative system in 1832. For generations they had existed not primarily for municipal service but as props of the old Parliamentary representation, and when they no longer afforded this service their usefulness had come to an end, and the remodeling of these municipal corporations was a reform which could not be postponed. It is not conceivable that they could long have survived the act of 1832; and after the Parliamentary franchise had been extended in 1884, and made uniform in rural and urban England, it was inconceivable that either the old system of county government, devoid altogether of any resemblance to the representative principle as it is now understood, or that church vestry rule in the rural parishes could long survive. The Parliamentary franchise had at last, after centuries of warping, been put back on the democratic basis on which it originated in the days of Edward I., and it was inevitable that parish and county government should be placed on a similar basis.

County government was so reformed in 1888. It was reformed by the first unionist government (1886-92)—a tory government which was greatly influenced by the liberal-unionists who, as yet, had not identified themselves with the political fortunes of the administration, and who moreover had not abandoned their liberalism,

as they did after 1896. The same government in 1889 pushed forward in the path of constitutional reform by their dependence on the liberal-unionists—created a county council for London, or rather for that vast aggregation of municipal areas which lies outside the old city of London. In 1894 a liberal government, strongly democratic in make-up and character, reformed parish government, in provincial England; and in 1900 vestry rule in the great populous extra-mural areas of the metropolis, still in some measure under the ægis of the established church—a rule which had been partially reformed in 1818 and 1830—was remodeled; and there were created for London twenty-eight separate municipalities, governed as the municipalities of Provincial England had been since the municipal corporations act of 1835. With the exception of the sweeping changes made by the education acts of 1902 and 1903, this measure of 1900 for London is the last of the great reforms in English local government. In this field there remains now practically nothing to reform; for as was remarked at the outset, local government in England, in all its phases, has been completely remodeled between 1832 and 1900.

It is with these institutions, which are now of the past, the latest survivor of which disappeared as recently as 1900, that Mr. and Mrs. Webb are concerned, and of which they are to treat in the five or six volumes to be devoted to this obviously needed work. The work is obviously needed; for, except for histories of the poor law and of the police, and except for Merewether and Stephens' history of the boroughs, which in view of the new material which has become accessible since 1835, and the newer methods of handling historical data, is now necessarily much out of date, there is no comprehensive or adequate history of English local government by an English writer.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Webb's work is on such a magnificent scale, it is to cover not more than a century and a half. They begin with 1689; and they do not propose to travel further than 1835—the year when the municipal corporations were reformed. Even with the assistance of their numerous trained colleagues in the work—an assistance that is most generously avowed—it would have been almost a physical impossibility for Mr. and Mrs. Webb to have pushed their investigations back to the earliest times. Their working lives might have been wholly devoted to research had they made the attempt, and in that case these exceptionally valuable volumes might not have got into print. They have been content to take the revolution of

1689 as their starting point; and the starting point has been admirably chosen. Before the revolution county and municipal government was subject to some supervision from the Star Chamber, from the privy council, and from the judges of the high court. After the revolution this supervision from the central government was practically at an end; and there was no resumption of it—certainly no continuous or systematic supervision—until after 1834, when the local government board and the home office again took up some such supervision as had been exercised from London until as late as the Restoration. For a century and a half it may colloquially be said that the municipal corporations, the magistrates in quarter sessions, and the vestries concerned with parochial administration went their own gait, with no interference from State departments; with the government showing little or no concern in their proceedings; or in the improvement of their organization and with Parliament little disposed to interference, except when some patent break-down in municipal rule called for the creation of new statutory local governing authorities, supplementary to the old municipal corporations; or when the magistrates concerned with county government, who were always strongly represented in the House of Commons, asked for new or special powers.

First for the parish, and next for the county, Mr. and Mrs. Webb describe the organizations of their government as they stood at the revolution, and trace the changes which each underwent between 1689 and 1835. They show how these local governing bodies were constituted. As regards the vestries they make clear their connection with the established church; their part in the assessment and collection of taxes; and they bring out with much vividness the different types of vestry—the vestries which were open to all rate-payers, and democratic in their organization and methods; and the vestries which were close, and in which there were oligarchies—in some cases bosses as well—not so avaricious or corrupt as the oligarchies in the old municipal corporations, but self-perpetuating and sometimes as little amenable to local public opinion. As regards both parish and county, Mr. and Mrs. Webb bring into view the class of men who interested themselves in local government; the increasing volume of work which was thrown upon them in those parishes and counties which, by reason of manufacturing development or the growth of London, became great centers of population; and they also trace for the counties the incoming of a local civil service.

In working out the changes in the counties, Mr. and Mrs. Webb are perhaps most informing, certainly most interesting, when they are describing how the magistracy became exclusively of the landed classes; how the county benches came under the domination of Tories and men who were of the established church; and how in the last half of the eighteenth century the county benches drew to themselves practically all legislative authority, and to a large extent became assemblies whose word was law. Where the parish vestries and the rule of the magistrates failed, and to what causes failure was due, is traced with much fullness; as are also the reasons for the unpopularity of the magistrates as governors of the counties. All this, and much more that is equally interesting and equally informing because so much of it is in print for the first time, is supported by a wealth of authorities and illustrations, given in the copious footnotes, which testify to the patient and enlightened research in county and parish records hitherto uninvestigated, and in contemporary literature which has long ago passed into oblivion.

A really serviceable index was to be expected in a work by Mr. and Mrs. Webb. They more than fulfill this expectation. They make a new departure in indexing, and one which has much to commend it; for the index, which extends to fifty-five pages, is divided into (1) subjects; (2) authors and other persons; and (3) places. All the vast material which has gone into the volume which is divided into two books, of seven and six chapters, respectively—is splendidly marshaled; and an index such as has been described makes almost every statement in the book easily available for reference.

EDWARD PORRITT.

Reconstruction in South Carolina, 1865-1877. By JOHN S. REYNOLDS. (Columbia, S. C.: The State Company. 1906. Pp. 522.)

Several volumes have already appeared dealing with that most interesting period of historical investigation, the reconstruction era, and to this list Mr. Reynolds has added another in his book on South Carolina. It takes up the story with the capture of the Confederate governor, Magrath, in 1865, and closes with the installation of the democratic administration in 1877. The chronological narrative form is used almost exclusively throughout the volume, with one interruption for the Ku-Klux trouble. The last four chapters are